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**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

ROBERT CAULEY,

**Plaintiff,**

vs.

23737 HAWTHORNE, LLC; and DOES 1 to 10,

## Defendants.

**Case No.:**

**COMPLAINT FOR INJUNCTIVE  
RELIEF AND DAMAGES FOR DENIAL  
OF CIVIL RIGHTS OF A DISABLED  
PERSON IN VIOLATIONS OF**

1. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES;
  2. CALIFORNIA'S UNRUH CIVIL RIGHTS ACT;
  3. CALIFORNIA'S DISABLED PERSONS ACT;
  4. CALIFORNIA HEALTH & SAFETY CODE;
  5. NEGLIGENCE

Plaintiff ROBERT CAULEY (“Plaintiff”) complains of Defendants 23737 HAWTHORNE, LLC; and DOES 1 to 10 (“Defendants”) and alleges as follows:

11

## PARTIES

1. Plaintiff is a California resident with a physical disability with substantial limitation in his ability to walk. Plaintiff suffers from paraplegia due to T5 and T6 vertebrae spinal cord injury and requires the use of a wheelchair at all times when traveling in public.

2. Defendants are, or were at the time of the incident, the real property owners, business operators, lessors and/or lessees of the real property for a bank ("Business") located at or about 23737 Hawthorne Blvd., Torrance, California.

3. The true names and capacities, whether individual, corporate, associate or otherwise of Defendant DOES 1 through 10, and each of them, are unknown to Plaintiff, who therefore sues said Defendants by such fictitious names. Plaintiff will ask leave of Court to amend this Complaint when the true names and capacities have been ascertained. Plaintiff is informed and believes and, based thereon, alleges that each such fictitiously named Defendants are responsible in some manner, and therefore, liable to Plaintiff for the acts herein alleged.

4. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges that, at all relevant times, each of the Defendants was the agent, employee, or alter-ego of each of the other Defendants, and/or was acting in concert with each of the other Defendants, and in doing the things alleged herein was acting with the knowledge and consent of the other Defendants and within the course and scope of such agency or employment relationship.

5. Whenever and wherever reference is made in this Complaint to any act or failure to act by a defendant or Defendants, such allegations and references shall also be deemed to mean the acts and failures to act of each Defendant acting individually, jointly and severally.

## **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

6. The Court has jurisdiction of this action pursuant to 28 USC §§ 1331 and 1343 for violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, (42 USC §12101, *et seq.*)

1       7. Pursuant to pendant jurisdiction, attendant and related causes of action,  
2 arising from the same nucleus of operating facts, are also brought under California law,  
3 including, but not limited to, violations of California Civil Code §§51, 51.5, 52(a), 52.1,  
4 54, 54., 54.3 and 55.

5 ||| 8. Plaintiff's claims are authorized by 28 USC §§ 2201 and 2202.

6        9.      Venue is proper in this court pursuant to 28 USC §1331(b). Defendants  
7 reside in this district, Orange County, California.

## **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

10. In or about June of 2022, Plaintiff went to the Business.

11. The Business is a bank business establishment, open to the public, and is a place of public accommodation that affects commerce through its operation. Defendants provide parking spaces for customers.

13       12. While attempting to enter the Business during each visit, Plaintiff personally  
14 encountered a number of barriers that interfered with his ability to use and enjoy the  
15 goods, services, privileges, and accommodations offered at the Business.

16       13. To the extent of Plaintiff's personal knowledge, the barriers at the Business  
17 included, but were not limited to, the following:

- a. Defendants failed to comply with the federal and state standards for the parking space designated for persons with disabilities. Defendants failed to post required signage such as “Minimum Fine \$250.”
  - b. Defendant failed to maintain the parking space designated for persons with disabilities to comply with the federal and state standards. Defendants failed to provide a proper ramp for the persons with disabilities.
  - c. Defendant failed to maintain the parking space designated for persons with disabilities to comply with the federal and state standards. Defendants failed to provide the access aisles with level surface slopes.

1       14. These barriers and conditions denied Plaintiff the full and equal access to the  
2 Business and caused him difficulty and frustration. Plaintiff wishes to patronize the  
3 Business, however, Plaintiff is deterred from visiting the Business because his knowledge  
4 of these violations prevents him from returning until the barriers are removed.

5       15. Based on the violations, Plaintiff alleges, on information and belief, that  
6 there are additional barriers to accessibility at the Business after further site inspection.  
7 Plaintiff seeks to have all barriers related to his disability remedied. *See Doran v. 7-*  
8 *Eleven, Inc.* 524 F.3d 1034 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2008).

9       16. In addition, Plaintiff alleges, on information and belief, that Defendants  
10 knew that particular barriers render the Business inaccessible, violate state and federal  
11 law, and interfere with access for the physically disabled.

12        17. At all relevant times, Defendants had and still have control and dominion  
13 over the conditions at this location and had and still have the financial resources to  
14 remove these barriers without much difficulty or expenses to make the Business  
15 accessible to the physically disabled in compliance with ADDAG and Title 24  
16 regulations. Defendants have not removed such barriers and have not modified the  
17 Business to conform to accessibility regulations.

## **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

## **VIOLET OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990**

20       18. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior  
21 paragraphs in this complaint.

22        19. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), no individual  
23 shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of  
24 the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of any place of  
25 public accommodation by any person who owns, leases, or leases to, or operates a place  
26 of public accommodation. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 12182(a).

20. Discrimination, *inter alia*, includes:

- 1       a. A failure to make reasonable modification in policies, practices, or  
2           procedures, when such modifications are necessary to afford such  
3           goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations  
4           to individuals with disabilities, unless the entity can demonstrate that  
5           making such modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of  
6           such goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or  
7           accommodations. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(ii).
- 8       b. A failure to take such steps as may be necessary to ensure that no  
9           individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or  
10          otherwise treated differently than other individuals because of the  
11          absence of auxiliary aids and services, unless the entity can  
12          demonstrate that taking such steps would fundamentally alter the  
13          nature of the good, service, facility, privilege, advantage, or  
14          accommodation being offered or would result in an undue burden. 42  
15          U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iii).
- 16      c. A failure to remove architectural barriers, and communication barriers  
17          that are structural in nature, in existing facilities, and transportation  
18          barriers in existing vehicles and rail passenger cars used by an  
19          establishment for transporting individuals (not including barriers that  
20          can only be removed through the retrofitting of vehicles or rail  
21          passenger cars by the installation of a hydraulic or other lift), where  
22          such removal is readily achievable. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iv).
- 23      d. A failure to make alterations in such a manner that, to the maximum  
24          extent feasible, the altered portions of the facility are readily  
25          accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including  
26          individuals who use wheelchairs or to ensure that, to the maximum  
27          extent feasible, the path of travel to the altered area and the  
28          bathrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains serving the altered

1 area, are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with  
2 disabilities where such alterations to the path or travel or the  
3 bathrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains serving the altered  
4 area are not disproportionate to the overall alterations in terms of cost  
5 and scope. 42 U.S.C. § 12183(a)(2).

6 21. Where parking spaces are provided, accessible parking spaces shall be  
7 provided. 1991 ADA Standards § 4.1.2(5); 2010 ADA Standards § 208. One in every  
8 eight accessible spaces, but not less than one, shall be served by an access aisle 96 in  
9 (2440 mm) wide minimum and shall be designated “van accessible.” 1991 ADA  
10 Standards § 4.1.2(5)(b). For every six or fraction of six parking spaces, at least one shall  
11 be van parking space. 2010 ADA Standards § 208.2.4.

12 22. Under the ADA, the method and color of marking are to be addressed by  
13 State or local laws or regulations. *See* 36 C.F.R., Part 1191. Under the California  
14 Building Code (“CBC”), the parking space identification signs shall include the  
15 International Symbol of Accessibility. Parking identification signs shall be reflectorized  
16 with a minimum area of 70 square inches. Additional language or an additional sign  
17 below the International Symbol of Accessibility shall state “Minimum Fine \$250.” A  
18 parking space identification sign shall be permanently posted immediately adjacent and  
19 visible from each parking space, shall be located with its centerline a maximum of 12  
20 inches from the centerline of the parking space and may be posted on a wall at the  
21 interior end of the parking space. *See* CBC § 11B-502.6, *et seq.*

22 23. Moreover, an additional sign shall be posted either in a conspicuous place at  
23 each entrance to an off-street parking facility or immediately adjacent to on-site  
24 accessible parking and visible from each parking space. The additional sign shall not be  
25 less than 17 inches wide by 22 inches high. The additional sign shall clearly state in  
26 letters with a minimum height of 1 inch the following: “Unauthorized vehicles parked in  
27 designated accessible spaces not displaying distinguishing placards or special license  
28 plates issued for persons with disabilities will be towed always at the owner’s expense...”

1 See CBC § 11B-502.8, *et seq.* Signs shall be 60 inches minimum above the finish floor or  
2 ground surface measured to the bottom of the sign. 2010 ADA Standards § 502.6.

3 24. Here, Defendants failed to provide signs stating “Minimum Fine \$250.”

4 25. The cross slope of ramp surfaces shall be no greater than 1:50. Ramp  
5 surfaces shall comply with 4.5. 1991 Standards § 4.8.6. Ramps and landings with drop-  
6 offs shall have curbs, walls, railings, or projecting surfaces that prevent people from  
7 slipping off the ramp. Curbs shall be a minimum of 2 in (50 mm) high. 1991 Standards §  
8 4.8.7. Outdoor ramps and their approaches shall be designed so that water will not  
9 accumulate on walking surfaces. 1991 Standards § 4.8.8. Ground and floor surfaces  
10 along accessible routes and in accessible rooms and spaces including floors, walks,  
11 ramps, stairs, and curb ramps, shall be stable, firm, slip-resistant, and shall comply with  
12 4.5. 1991 Standards § 4.5.1.

13 26. Here, Defendants failed to provide a compliant ramp for the access aisle.

14 27. Under the 1991 Standards, parking spaces and access aisles must be level  
15 with surface slopes not exceeding 1:50 (2%) in all directions. 1991 Standards § 4.6.2.  
16 Accessible parking spaces shall be at least 96 in (2440 mm) wide. Parking access aisles  
17 shall be part of an accessible route to the building or facility entrance and shall comply  
18 with 4.3. Two accessible parking spaces may share a common access aisle. Parked  
19 vehicle overhangs shall not reduce the clear width of an accessible route. Parking spaces  
20 and access aisles shall be level with surface slopes not exceeding 1:50 (2%) in all  
21 directions. 1991 Standards § 4.6.3.

22 28. Here, the access aisle is not level with the parking space. Under the 2010  
23 Standards, access aisles shall be at the same level as the parking spaces they serve.  
24 Changes in level are not permitted. 2010 Standards § 502.4. “Access aisles are required  
25 to be nearly level in all directions to provide a surface for transfer to and from vehicles.”  
26 2010 Standards § 502.4 Advisory. *Id.* No more than a 1:48 slope is permitted.

29. By failing to maintain the facility to be readily accessible and usable by Plaintiff, Defendants are in violation of Plaintiff's rights under the ADA and its related regulations.

30. The Business has denied and continues to deny full and equal access to Plaintiff and to other people with disabilities. Plaintiff has been and will continue to be discriminated against due to the lack of accessible facilities, and therefore, seeks injunctive relief to alter facilities to make such facilities readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.

## **SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

## **VIOLATION OF THE UNRUH CIVIL RIGHTS ACT**

31. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior paragraphs in this complaint.

32. California Civil Code § 51 states, “All persons within the jurisdiction of this state are free and equal, and no matter what their sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, citizenship, primary language, or immigration status are entitled to the full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services in all business establishments of every kind whatsoever.”

33. California Civil Code § 52 states, “Whoever denies, aids or incites a denial, or make any discrimination or distinction contrary to Section 51, 515, or 51.6, is liable for each and every offense for the actual damages, and any amount that may be determined by a jury, or a court sitting without a jury, up to a maximum of three times the amount of actual damage but in no case less than four thousand dollars (\$4,000) and any attorney’s fees that may be determined by the court in addition thereto, suffered by any person denied the rights provided in Section 51, 51.5, or 51.6.

34. California Civil Code § 51(f) specifies, “a violation of the right of any individual under federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336) shall also constitute a violation of this section.”

1       35. The actions and omissions of Defendants alleged herein constitute a denial  
2 of full and equal accommodation, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services by  
3 physically disabled persons within the meaning of California Civil Code §§ 51 and 52.  
4 Defendants have discriminated against Plaintiff in violation of California Civil Code §§  
5 51 and 52.

6       36. The violations of the Unruh Civil Rights Act caused Plaintiff to experience  
7 difficulty, discomfort, or embarrassment. The Defendants are also liable for statutory  
8 damages as specified in California Civil Code §55.56(a)-(c).

## **THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION**

## **VIOLATION OF CALIFORNIA DISABLED PERSONS ACT**

11       37. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior  
12 paragraphs in this complaint.

13       38. California Civil Code § 54.1(a) states, “Individuals with disabilities shall be  
14 entitled to full and equal access, as other members of the general public, to  
15 accommodations, advantages, facilities, medical facilities, including hospitals, clinics,  
16 and physicians’ offices, and privileges of all common carriers, airplanes, motor vehicles,  
17 railroad trains, motorbuses, streetcars, boats, or any other public conveyances or modes  
18 of transportation (whether private, public, franchised, licensed, contracted, or otherwise  
19 provided), telephone facilities, adoption agencies, private schools, hotels, loading places,  
20 places of public accommodations, amusement, or resort, and other places in which the  
21 general public is invited, subject only to the conditions and limitations established by  
22 law, or state or federal regulation, and applicable alike to all persons.

23       39. California Civil Code § 54.3(a) states, “Any person or persons, firm or  
24 corporation who denies or interferes with admittance to or enjoyment of public facilities  
25 as specified in Sections 54 and 54.1 or otherwise interferes with the rights of an  
26 individual with a disability under Sections 54, 54.1 and 54.2 is liable for each offense for  
27 the actual damages, and any amount as may be determined by a jury, or a court sitting  
28 without a jury, up to a maximum of three times the amount of actual damages but in no

1 case less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) and any attorney's fees that may be  
2 determined by the court in addition thereto, suffered by any person denied the rights  
3 provided in Section 54, 54.1, and 54.2.

4       40. California Civil Code § 54(d) specifies, "a violation of the right of an  
5 individual under Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336) also  
6 constitute a violation of this section, and nothing in this section shall be construed to limit  
7 the access of any person in violation of that act.

8       41. The actions and omissions of Defendants alleged herein constitute a denial  
9 of full and equal accommodation, advantages, and facilities by physically disabled  
10 persons within the meaning of California Civil Code § 54. Defendants have  
11 discriminated against Plaintiff in violation of California Civil Code § 54.

12       42. The violations of the California Disabled Persons Act caused Plaintiff to  
13 experience difficulty, discomfort, and embarrassment. The Defendants are also liable for  
14 statutory damages as specified in California Civil Code §55.56(a)-(c).

#### **FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

#### **CALIFORNIA HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 19955, et seq.**

17       43. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior  
18 paragraphs in this complaint.

19       44. Plaintiff and other similar physically disabled persons who require the use of  
20 a wheelchair are unable to use public facilities on a "full and equal" basis unless each  
21 such facility is in compliance with the provisions of California Health & Safety Code §  
22 19955 et seq. Plaintiff is a member of the public whose rights are protected by the  
23 provisions of California Health & Safety Code § 19955 et seq.

24       45. The purpose of California Health & Safety Code § 1995 et seq. is to ensure  
25 that public accommodations or facilities constructed in this state with private funds  
26 adhere to the provisions of Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 4450) of Division 5 of  
27 Title 1 of the Government Code. The code relating to such public accommodations also  
28 require that "when sanitary facilities are made available for the public, clients, or

1 employees in these stations, centers, or buildings, they shall be made available for  
2 persons with disabilities.

3       46. Title II of the ADA holds as a “general rule” that no individual shall be  
4 discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of goods  
5 (or use), services, facilities, privileges, and accommodations offered by any person who  
6 owns, operates, or leases a place of public accommodation. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(a).  
7 Further, each and every violation of the ADA also constitutes a separate and distinct  
8 violation of California Civil Code §§ 54(c) and 54.1(d), thus independently justifying an  
9 award of damages and injunctive relief pursuant to California law, including but not  
10 limited to Civil Code § 54.3 and Business and Professions Code § 17200, et seq.

## **FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

## NEGLIGENCE

13       47. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior  
14 paragraphs in this complaint.

15       48. Defendants have a general duty and a duty under the ADA, Unruh Civil  
16 Rights Act and California Disabled Persons Act to provide safe and accessible facilities  
17 to the Plaintiff.

18       49. Defendants breached their duty of care by violating the provisions of ADA,  
19 Unruh Civil Rights Act and California Disabled Persons Act.

20       50. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligent conduct, Plaintiff  
21 has suffered damages.

## **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

23 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully prays for relief and judgment against  
24 Defendants as follows:

25       1. For preliminary and permanent injunction directing Defendants to comply  
26 with the Americans with Disability Act and the Unruh Civil Rights Act;

27       2. Award of all appropriate damages, including but not limited to statutory  
28 damages, general damages and treble damages in amounts, according to proof;

3. Award of all reasonable restitution for Defendants' unfair competition practices;

4. Reasonable attorney's fees, litigation expenses, and costs of suit in this action;

5. Prejudgment interest pursuant to California Civil Code § 3291; and

6. Such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

# **DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY**

Pursuant to Rule 38(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Plaintiff hereby demands a trial by jury on all issues so triable.

Dated: August 22, 2022

## SO. CAL. EQUAL ACCESS GROUP

By: /s/ Jason J. Kim  
Jason J. Kim, Esq.  
Attorneys for Plaintiff